

WHITEROCKS RANGER DISTRICT
Ashley National Forest
1905 - 1955

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HISTORICAL FILE

By Wm. A. (Bill) Worf

On February 1, 1905, the Forest Service was created in it's present form in the Department of Agriculture through merging of the earlier Bureau of Forestry and the Forestry Division of the General Land Office.

The Ashley Forest was established on July 1, 1908. Until this date the area had been included in the Uinta National Forest with headquarters at Provo, Utah. Mr. Dan Marshal was Supervisor of the Uinta N.F. and the area now covered by the Ashley N.F. was administered by Assistant Ranger Grant Carpenter and Forest Guard Albert A. Hardy. Mr. Hardy later became "Ranger at Large" on the Ashley Forest.

The Whiterocks District in 1908 included all of the Lake Fork, Yellowstone, Uintah River and Whiterocks drainages, and was handled by Ranger Bert Ray stationed at Whiterocks. On June 1, 1910 the District was divided to form the Lake Fork District under Ranger Seth Perry and the Whiterocks District under Ranger John D. "Paddy" Clyde. The Whiterocks District at that time included only the Uinta River and the Whiterocks drainages. In 1935 the west side of the Dry Fork drainage was added bringing the District to its present size of about 255,000 acres.

Mr. Wm. N. Anderson was the first Supervisor of the Ashley N.F. from July 1, 1908 to May 30, 1925; A. G. Nord May 1, 1925 to October 31, 1930; James O. Stewart November 1, 1930 to March 4, 1936; A. L. Taylor March 5,

1936 to August 31, 1941; Earl C. Stanford September 1, 1941 to November 15, 1946; Robert S. Park November 22, 1944 to February 28, 1945; and Ona A. Harrison March 1, 1945 to June 18, 1950. The present Supervisor Wm. D. Hurst has been in charge since June 19, 1950.

The first ranger of the combined Whiterocks and Lake Fork District was Mr. Albert A. Ray who was followed by John D. Clyde. Mr. Clyde was in charge of the Whiterocks District after its division in 1910. Other rangers have been: Charles Demoisy December 1, 1910 to June 30, 1916; Vern Bird July 1, 1916 to July 30, 1917; Albert E. Blood August 1, 1917 to April 30, 1920; Thomas R. Parry May 1, 1920 to September 1, 1923, Bert Hardy, then Ranger at large on the Ashley, administered the district until George Talkup took charge on November 16, 1923. Mr. Walkup was in charge of the District for over 30 years until he retired on April 30, 1954. The present ranger was transferred to Elkhorn from the Heber District of the Uinta N.F. on June 1, 1954.

Early day rangers received very low pay and were required to furnish their own stock and equipment and to provide for its maintenance. All travel expenses were paid by the ranger and if living quarters were furnished they were generally of very low standard. Regulations at that time required very detailed accounting of every stick of wood removed from the Forest and this work was hampered by no roads and poor trails. Many changes have taken place in the past fifty years in improved roads, trails and communications, more realistic administration policies and better living facilities for rangers and their families.

LUMBERING

Some Ponderosa Pine from Cart Hollow had been used in the construction of Forts Duchesne and Whiterocks about 1880. There was no further record of lumber production on the District until a wagon road was made up Bowles Canyon and a mill set up in the area now called Mosby Park in about 1907. At approximately the same time a wagon road was made up Mill Canyon and a mill set up there. These operations accounted for only a small volume used locally and generally consisted of high grading accessible stands.

In 1920 logging operations penetrated deeper into the Lodgepole Pine stands. Henry Lee made a wagon road through Grouse Creek Canyon into the vicinity of Paradise Park and established a sawmill about one mile South of the park. Some logging was taking place in Pole Creek Canyon about this same time. Annual cut probably did not exceed 400,000 Bd.Ft. at that time. The cut has greatly increased since then with the advent of the Mine Prop market and improved transportation and logging methods until 1953 when the cut was 3,600,000 Bd.Ft., and 2,660,000 Bd.Ft. in 1954. The timber business now provides livelihood for some twelve families and seasonal employment for about 35 additional men. Besides the lumber and mine props coming from the forest there were also; over 12,000 poles, 3,000 posts and 450 christmas trees out from the district in 1954.

Through cooperative efforts with timber operators, lumber users, and local civil organizations efforts are being made to improve market conditions and methods of timber utilization. As markets improve and new access roads are constructed the cut will increase until it is on a sustained yield basis or about 6,000,000 Bd.Ft. annually.

GRAZING

The first sheep were taken into the high country on the district by H. W. Hooley in 1902 under permit issued by the Department of the Interior. These were followed closely by John Reader in 1903, the Painter Sheep Company in 1903 and Ed Samuals in 1904. Bill Caldwell took the first sheep into the Dry Fork drainage in 1905.

The first cattle association on the district was the Hayden Association formed in about 1909 or 1910. The name was changed in about 1913 to the Farm Cr. Assoc. as it is today. Oren Gardner of Neola was the first president of the association followed by Will Oberhansley. The first Association secretary was Harry Van Tassell followed by Wick Warren and Perry Bowen in that order. Most of the early permits have changed hands several times during the past fifty years. This and other associations have contributed much to the National Forest range in fences, waater developments and other needed improvements.

In 1954 17,652 sheep and 1,470 cattle were permitted to graze on the District. During this time many range problems have developed but have been or are being solved through cooperative efforts of permittees, livestock association and Forest Officers.

The first range reseeding on the Ashley Forest was done on the Farm Cr. cattle allotment following a 500 acre burn in 1947. Since that time an additional 1670 acres have been reseeded by various methods and more is planned as funds permit.

WATERSHEDS

The importance of irrigation and culinary water to the Western United States has made it the most important single product of most of our national forest lands. This importance locally can be seen by taking a look at the vast amounts of money spent in improving water storage on many of our high lakes. The first of these Paradise reservoir was started by the Mosby Irrigation Co. in 1916. Water consumption is increasing each year. In 1905 the average per-capita residential consumption of water was 8 gallons daily in this region. Today the residential consumption is between 30 & 50 gallons for each person daily and that does not include irrigation, manufacturing and municipal uses which also require greatly increased quantities of water. The production of water is so vital that all other uses must be managed to prevent damage to our valuable watersheds and so as not to interfere with the production of purity of our water supply.

RECREATION

In 1905 there were no campgrounds or other recreation facilities on the district and very little thought was given at that time to the recreation potential of National Forest lands. In 1905 there were no fish in the headwaters of the Uinta and Whiterocks rivers. High falls in each of these areas prevented fish from migrating up stream.

In 1934 the road was built into Uinta Park and the Uinta Park campground and picnic areas were constructed under the CCC program. The construction of the Paradise Park camp ground was started in 1954. The capacity of

these recreation facilities are outstripped on summer weekends and holidays when it is not uncommon to count 1000 persons using the Uinta Park recreation area in a single day.

With the increased population and trend toward greater outdoor activity, many more family units will be needed by 1960. Recreation visits to the district in 1954 were estimated at 13,275 visits of one day or less and 8,475 overnight visits.

Twelve summer homes are maintained on approved summer home lots in Uinta Canyon. During 1954 additional lots were surveyed and will be developed as the demand requires.

The first fish in the head of the Uinta river drainage were planted in Chain Lakes on June 18, 1924 and in Lake Atwood on June 19, 1924. This work was done by Melvin Roberts, then running sheep in Atwood Basin, Mr. & Mrs. Fred Sargent and Ranger Walkup. Mr. Walkup reports that they left the hatchery early on the 18th and, in order to keep the fish from dying, rode nearly non-stop, arriving at Lake Atwood some time after midnight on the 19th. These lakes proved to be excellent habitat for the fish and on July 5th 1925 Ranger Walkup caught trout 12½" long from Lake Atwood. In 1928 the first fish were planted in the upper Whiterocks drainage when Charles Taylor and Wilford Caldwell, sheepmen, planted Queant Lake. Since then, thorough cooperative efforts of the State Fish and Game Dept., stockmen, sportsmen, duderandhers, outfitters and the forest service, over 65

lakes have been stocked and are producing some of the best high lake fishing in the Western United States. This area attracts sportsmen from all over the world who have heard of its scenic beauty and wonderful fishing.

The first "Trail Riders of the Wilderness" trip, sponsored by the Society of American Foresters, was outfitted by the U Bar Dude Ranch in 1951.

These trips have been so extremely popular that two were made in 1954 and three are planned for 1955. Former Ranger acts as guide on these trips.

ROADS AND TRAILS

In 1905 there were no trails or roads on the District and travel, especially in the high country was very difficult.

The first trail construction money was received in 1912 during the time Mr. DeMoisy was ranger here. The district trail crew with Bill Burton of Vernal in charge constructed a trail from Grouse Cr. through Paradise park to Chepeta Lake. Much of this first trail is still in use today. During the early years many miles of trails were constructed by the rangers themselves and improved on later as funds would permit. Since that time the trail system has been extended until today there is about 208 miles of improved trail on the district.

The first trail bridge was built across the Uinta River near the mouth of Krebs Creek in 1926 from logs. The project was a cooperative one, undertaken by the Dry Gulch Irr. Co., the George Roberts sheep Co. and the

Forest Service. This bridge served until 1954 when it was replaced by a new 85 ft. steel structure. Two more steel bridges were constructed on the Uinta River trail, one at Shale Canyon and the other at the Rock Canyon crossing, in 1953 and 1954 to provide easier and safer travel for the ever increasing number of users. All materials for these bridges were packed in on horses and mules, in some cases as far as twelve miles.

The first automobile road was constructed in 1926 to Mosby Mt. Road construction has gradually continued as funds would permit and the need arose until 1954 when 5 miles of new road were built connecting the Farm Cr. and Pole Cr. roads and greatly aiding management and fire control activities on the District. This road also opens up additional stands of timber. Roads within the district boundary now total over thirty miles. Future plans call for timber access roads to be built into the head of the Whiterocks drainage.

In 1911 & 12 the Forest Service telephone line was built from Spring Cr. (North of Vernal) to Moon Lake. This was done during Mr. De Moisy's tenure here and was mostly ranger labor. For years this was the only telephone line in the Whiterocks area and was heavily relied on by the local people. Mr. and Mrs. Walkup tell of being wakened many times so that some one could call a doctor or to deliver an important message to a neighbor, sometimes eight or ten miles away. Since that time the line has been extended to Paradise Park, Uinta Park and the Altonah Ranger Station.

FIRE CONTROL

During the 1800's great fires burned over thousands of acres of valuable timber lands. Since 1905 the average annual burned area has been less than nine acres. The largest fire during this time was the 500 acre burn on Farm Cr. Mtn. in 1947. This record has been made possible through the fine cooperation of local citizens and other federal and state organizations to help in providing prompt and effective detection and suppression action.

LANDMARKS

Many people have wandered at the names of some of our lakes, Mtns. and other landmarks. Many of these were named for early pioneers of the area and others have a story behind their name.

Paradise Park received it's name in 1906 or 1907 when Bill Caldwell, a sheepman in the Dry Fork drainage, become lost in a snow storm. Mr. Caldwell wandered for two days and finally came upon the camp of Ellis J. Ellis. Bill said "it sure looked like Paradise to me" and the name stuck.

Chepeta Lake was named by Chief Ouray after his squaw Chepeta, meaning "Laughing water".

Kings Peak and Mt. Emmons were named for two early engineers who surveyed much of the Uinta Basin. Roberts Pass, Painter Basin, Taylor Lake, Rasmussen Lakes, Samuels Lake and Reader Lakes were all named after early sheep men.

THE FUTURE

The growing population and expanding economies of the nation will mean an ever increasing demand on the National Forest resources.

With expanding markets, development of new uses for wood products, better logging methods and improved utilization we can expect the Lodgepole and Spruce stands of the Ashley N.F. to play an increasingly important roll in the economy of the Uinta Basin.

Further improvement of ranges can be expected in the future through cooperative management to sustain production of high Quality forage and to provide for soil stability.

Demands on recreation facilities are expected to increase many times. Present facilities will have to be expanded and others provided. The Ashley Forest contains most of the true mountain wilderness area in the state of Utah and use of these areas is increasing annually.

The function of national forest watersheds in providing usable water is perhaps their greatest single contribution to the people of this area. Water is the common denominator of all resource use and industrial development in the Intermountain Region.

Fifty years from now, as today, the strength of the Nation will lie in its people and its resources.